spent on mementoes given to foreign delegations, embassies and others. However, in keeping with the practice on such occasions the institutes often give mementoes to the dignitaries invited to inaugurate the programme/exhibitions, as well as key-note speakers etc.

Amount spent on Hospitality

793. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Export Promotion Councils and Federation of Indian Export Organisations have shown clearly and transparently the costs on gifts, hospitalities, etc. given to Government Officers in their Annual Accounts and Annual Reports placed before the Parliament for the years 1995-96, 1996-97 and 1997-98;

(b) if so, the amount spent, year-wise, separately by each; and

(c) whether these grantee institutions do incur such expenditure?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) to (c) Export Promotion Councils including FIEO often give mementoes and provide accommodation to dignitaries, including Government officials, invited to inaugurate/attend programmes/exhibitions as well as to key note speakers etc. in keeping with the general practice on such occasions.

The expenditure incurred is insignificant in comparison with the total expenditure of these institutions and is not reflected separately in the Annual Reports/Annual Accounts.

महाराष्ट्र और गुजरात से किया जाने वाला निर्यात

794. **श्री चिमनभाई हरीभाई शुक्ला:** क्या वाणिज्य मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) महाराष्ट्र और गुजरात से किए जा रहे कृषि उत्पादों, खनिजों, वाणिकी, औद्योगिक तथा वस्त्र उत्पादों, रसायनों, उर्वरकों और अन्य उत्पादों के निर्यात का ब्यौरा क्या है;

(ख) प्रतिवर्ष निर्यात की जा रही इन वस्तुओं का पृथक-पृथक प्रतिशत कितना-कितना है;

(ग) गत एक दशक से इन राज्यों से निर्यात की गई वस्तुओं की जिला-वार सूची क्या है और इस निर्यात से वस्तु-वार कितना मुनाफा हुआ; और

(घ) राज्य में निर्यात क्रियाकलापों को प्रोत्साहित करने हेतु कौन-कौन से विशिष्ट कदम उठाए जा रहे है?

वाणिज्य मंत्री (श्री रामकृष्ण हेगड़े): (क) से (ग) वाणिज्य मंत्रालय समग्र रूप से देश से हुए निर्यातों के आकड़ें रखता है।

(घ) केन्द्रीय सरकार महाराष्ट्र और गुजरात सहित भारत के सभी राज्यों/संघ शासित क्षेत्रों से होने वाले विभिन्न मदों एवं उत्पादों के निर्यात के संवर्धन के लिए योजना तैयार करती है और अपनी निर्यात नीति बनाती है। निर्यात नीतियां तैयार करते समय, विभिन्न मदों एवं उत्पादों के निर्यात की संभावना एवं उसके लिए अपाक्षत बुनियादी सुविधाओं को ध्यान में रखा जाता है।

Patenting of Basmati Rice

795. SHRI D.P. YADAV:
SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether an American company , Rice Tec. Inc. received a patent of the Indian Basmati rice under the patent name "Texmati" early this year;

(b) if so, what steps have so far been taken to move the U.S. Administration for the cancellation of this patent; and

(c) what other steps are proposed to be taken in order to prevent bio-piracy and protect our bio-diversity?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) A patent under the title "Basmati Rice Lines and Grains" has been granted to Rice Tec. Inc. Alvin Taxas on 2.9.97

by the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, The United States of America.

(b) Patents are granted by respective Governments under their Patents laws. Whenever information is received about patents being taken on certain products which are of commercial interest to India and which in our views do not satisfy the criteria of patentability, steps are taken to assess whether the grant of patent can be challenged. After sufficient material is gathered, a challenge petition is filed for re-examination and Ultimate revocation of patent in that country.

(c) India is a party to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) which aims at conservation of biological diversity, sustainable use of its components and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources.

Rising Trend in Import

796. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether imports have shown rising April—September, 1998-99.

(c) There has been an increase in overall imports primarily due to increase in imports of gold and silver.

(d) The Government has not taken any specific additional measures in the past few months to specificially curb imports. The only instrumentality available with the Government has been placement of items on restricted list. No movement has taken place from free list to restricted list of imports in the past few months.

Engagement of TCS to Study FIEO

797. SHRI RAGHAVJI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Federation of Indian Export Organisations has engaged Tata Consultancy Services to study the various aspects of the working of FIEO and of the country's exports trade , etc.; and

(b) if so, the details of the report?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. M/s. Tata Consultancy Services are still in the process of completing the study.

Review of Value-Based Advance Licencing Scheme

798. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the value-based Advance Licensing Scheme is under review;

(b) whether it is a fact that in the recent past many exporters have misused the scheme;

(c) the loopholes in the scheme; and

(d) the action taken against the offenders?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) to (d) The Value Based Advance Licensing Scheme has been discontinued with effect from 1st April, 1997. Complaints of misuse of the scheme have not been received in the recent past. Provisions exist in the Foreign Trade (Development & Regulation) Act, 1992, for taking penal action against the offenders. Detailed Enforcement Guidelines were issued in this regard by the Director General of Foreign Trade to the field formations of D.G.F.T. in October, 1997, for dealing with cases of suspected misdeclaration of value, suggesting the following penal action, namely:

(i) Cancellation of licence;

(ii) Imposition of fiscal penalty;

(iii) Cancellation of Importer-Exporter Code numb[illegible] .